

**Job Corps Region II
Vocational Taskforce
Minutes
03/17/04 – 03/18/04**

Review Minutes from October 28-29

Urban Forestry Presentation

Rosie Blount (rosie@rblount.com) and Sean Stephens (ssteppens@acrtinc.com)

<http://www.acrtinc.com/jobcorps.html>

- Urban forestry – Maintaining trees in an urban environment.
- Urban forestry trains students to work for tree-caring companies with an emphasis on tree climbing and tree pruning.
- Rosie Blount is an independent Job Corps consultant. She travels and trains the Job Corps community and endorses certain programs.
- Sean Stephens showed the recruitment video of the urban forestry program, describing the trade and what it has to offer a center and community.
- Appraisal, Consulting, Research and Training, Inc., (ACRT) runs and operates the urban forestry trade.
- The job market is wide open for graduates of this trade, and there is a high demand right now in this industry.
- There are only five centers nationwide that offer this program – Angell, Golconda, Northland, Ouachita and Pine Knot.
- The overall rating of the urban forestry program exceeds the national average by more than 8 percent.
- ACRT is in need of more sites in order to consider administering more training.
- They are proposing a new name for the trade – Urban Tree Worker. The current trade name is often confused with “Forestry.”
- It is not necessary to have trees on the property in order to offer this trade on center. Job Corps centers are able to utilize any public trees, campgrounds, parks, etc.
- Pine Knot is currently administering the program and is ranked first among the centers.
- Some of the national companies that hire urban forestry students are: Asplundh, Davey, Bartlett, Tree Experts, Lewis and McCoy.
- ACRT has revised the TAR and put it into a more detailed and standardized format.
- The International Society of Arboriculture is ACRT’s partner for certifying graduates. They administer skills tests and tree ID tests.
- ACRT has increased its slot availability to 32 slots and two instructors.
- Safety is a major focus in this trade.
- Working in this area seems like a seasonal job, but it is not. Snow storms and ice storms may cause extra work (cleaning up trees after a hard snow).
- Average training for urban forestry is eight to 10 months.

- Students should be in solid physical condition when entering the program. There are physical fitness training classes.
- There are not very many academic requirements (no math).
- Students must be 18 years old to enter the program and have a valid driver's license. They will get their CDL upon employment.
- ACRT does most of their own placement, which is very consistent for this trade.
- There is a high turnover in this career due to the tough working environment.
- Some women do participate in the program
- Instructors are on ACRT's payroll.
- Estimated cost for climbing equipment for a center is about \$350.
- Urban forestry is a very team-oriented trade.
- A positive public image comes with the trade – students are seen doing positive acts for the community (cleaning trees around power lines, parks, pruning trees, etc.).
- Most student graduates start at \$10 per hour (climbers). Foremen start at about \$14-\$18 an hour.

VST Competition

- This is the first VST competition in Job Corps.
- Mike O'Malley from the National Office will attend the next meeting to help judge the VST contest. He will be able to provide insight into the architectural aspects of the competition.
- Karen Haines suggested a valuable piece of information for the competition – include VTRC in the entries.
- The Taskforce needs to emphasize the entry method (everything must fit on the foam core board).
- We need to decide the prizes for the VST Competition winners.
- MP&F is designing a postcard to serve as a reminder to center directors and staff, reinforcing that the entries must be on the foam core boards, and what the prizes will be.

VST Project Development and VTRC Training Resources

Tom McDermott

- McDermott presented Pete Calvo's PowerPoint presentations from the center directors' conference in January 2004.
- These two PowerPoints are available online at <http://www.jobcorpsregion2.com/staff/workareas/voc-resources.html>.
- They are posted under the "Vocational Resources" section. Click on "Staff" on the home page, then "Vocational Staff" on the left column, then "Resources." Please review these training aides and share them with your centers.
- The Taskforce decided the National Office should revisit which trades get VST dollars. There are some trades that should probably get money, but do not.
- Action item: Submit a list of trades that you think should have VST money and why. E-mail this to McDermott (McDermott.Thomas@dol.gov) and Kennedy (Kennedy.James@dol.gov).

Maryland Apprenticeship and Training

Bob Laudeman (rhlaudeman@aol.com)

- State-by-state listings of apprenticeships are available on the BAT Web site (www.doleta.gov/atels_bat).
- Maryland will have about 8,000 apprenticeships this year.
- Construction trades are very strong for apprenticeships.
- Laudeman passed out a book on national apprenticeships. Refer to Page 17 for a good comparison of industries. If you would like a PowerPoint version on a CD-ROM, please contact Laudeman.
- BAT is looking at adding health care apprenticeships, as well as geospatial and metal working apprenticeships.
- Laudeman would like to set up a meeting with all state and federal directors to discuss building relationships. Vocation managers and other key personnel will also be invited.
- Apryl Simmons brought up the fact that the students are not getting into the apprenticeship programs because they do not have strong enough math skills, or transportation like other students may have.
- Local relationships must be established between Job Corps contacts and BAT staff. Instructors need to also make these relationships.
- Action item: Send thoughts on the meeting to McDermott (McDermott.Thomas@dol.gov) or Kennedy (Kennedy.James@dol.gov).

OA Committee

Dan Hall (hallda@jcdc.jobcorps.org) and Cynthia Newman (newmancy@jobcorps.org)

- The OA committee was asked to come up with a tool for ACs to show students what to expect in Job Corps.
- They would like to get everyone's input on this. Hall passed out a memo with some initial ideas. If you have any comments, please e-mail Hall.
- An idea is to develop a survey for the entire Region, and then create a piece for all ACs.
- The Region is in the process of "cleaning up" the trades.
- Newman pointed out that a huge problem is when centers do not inform the OAs of trade closings or trade waiting lists. The sooner the students buy into the program, the better retention is. This can't happen if an AC has to go back to a student because the trade is closed.
- Pedro Ortiz suggested OAs and students narrow their choices down to a couple of trades to create options. He also stated that LMI has a book of trade requirements and other information.
- MP&F is going to work with the Regional Office on developing a system for OAs.

TARs Committee

Kenny Brown (brownke@jcdc.jobcorps.org), Allen Abey (abeya@jcdc.jobcorps.org), Molly Taleb (talebm@jcdc.jobcorps.org), Mike Danos (danosm@jcdc.jobcorps.org), Sam Rich (richsa@jcdc.jobcorps.org)

- The committee's job is to make the TARs more meaningful. The instructors, not the students, need to be aware of the levels.
- Students will see the new TARs document and think this is what they need to do to be successful. The expectation of the student would be to finish the entire TAR in order to be employable.
- Apryl Simmons remarked the National Office should raise the bar for typing the number of words per minute. Forty words per minute is entirely too low. It's not competitive.
- Solution: The "P" section is for additional skills. Here you can insert "Employer standard 55 words per minute," creating a more employable student.
- Instructors should notify vocational managers of A-level completers.
- Scott Ruane brought up the point that "proficiency levels" raise the bar too high for employers. Students who graduate from Job Corps are not necessarily "proficient and able to teach others." Should just read "proficient in ____."
- Possible way to restructure some TARs would be to say "if x percent of TAR is complete, then the student is a completer and is employable."
- One main purpose of the Vocational Taskforce is to find a way to keep students on center in order to become employable.
- Please take the Medical Office Support TAR to your centers and get feedback. If you have any recommendations, e-mail Kenny Brown by April 15.
- A local hospital has reviewed the TAR and agreed with the changes.
- The ultimate goal of the Computer Technician TAR is to get A+ Certification.
- If you offer computer technician training at your center, please e-mail recommendations to Mike Danos.
- The ultimate goal of the Network Cable Installer TAR is to get through copper and fiber optics.
- The Plumbing TAR is very straightforward. The committee combined the redundant line items.

Toolbox

Jim Kennedy (Kennedy.James@dol.gov) and Casey Stribling (cstribling@mpf.com)

- Please e-mail success stories to Casey Stribling.
- The upcoming issue will mail in August.
- In the next issue:
 - Success story
 - Urban Forestry
 - VST Competition winners
 - Apprenticeships (maybe a success story?)

Next meeting will be in August at the Camberly Brown Hotel in Louisville. The Taskforce will be judging the VST Competition.